

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 07815 181002Z

53

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG

SUBJECT: ISRAELI REACTION TO SADAT'S PEACE PROPOSAL

1. DURING THE PAST WEEK, STATEMENTS BY EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI LEADERS HAVE GENERATED CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION HERE ABOUT PEACE BETWEEN THE ARABS AND ISRAELIS. MEDIA GAVE WIDE COVERAGE TO REPORTS THAT IN PRESIDENT SADAT'S NOVEMBER 9 INTERVIEW WITH CODEL FLOWERS (CAIRO 15415) HE PROPOSED (A) ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ARAB TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967; (B) RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE; (C) A PALESTINIAN STATE CONSISTING OF THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP; AND (D) A PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ARAB PARTIES AND ISRAEL. ASKED ABOUT DIRECT CONTACTS WITH ISRAEL, SADAT SAID, ACCORDING TO THESE REPORTS, THAT PARTICIPATING IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE BEFORE ISRAEL EVACUATED HIS LAND WOULD CONSTITUTE DIRECT CONTACT.

2. ISRAELI REACTION TO SADAT'S PROPOSALS--AS REFLECTED IN STATEMENTS BY PRIME MINISTER RABIN, FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON, AND DEFENSE MINISTER PERES--HAS BEEN THAT (A) ISRAEL IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 07815 181002Z

WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN A RECONVENED GENEVA CONFERENCE,

BUT NOT IF THE PLO IS PRESENT THERE--THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AT GENEVA AS TO PARTICIPANTS MUST BE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 242 OF 1967 AND 338 OF 1973; (B) THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM MUST BE SOLVED AND THE BEST WAY TO DO THAT IS BY LINKING IT TO THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT; AND (C) PEACE BETWEEN THE ARABS AND ISRAEL SHOULD BE MORE THAN THE END OF BELLIGERENCY BETWEEN THEM. SADAT'S FIRST POINT--WITHDRAWAL--HAS NOT BEEN EMPHASIZED IN THE ISRAELI STATEMENTS.

3. THE ISRAELIS SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN GREATLY SURPRISED EITHER BY THE SUBSTANCE OF SADAT'S PROPOSALS, WHICH THEY VIEW AS A RESTATEMENT OF THE BASIC ARAB NEGOTIATING POSITION, OR BY HIS TIMING IN SETTING THEM FORTH IN THE WAKE OF THE RIYADH MINI-SUMMIT, THE ARAB LEAGUE MEETING IN CAIRO, AND THE AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. SADAT'S REPEATED USE OF THE PHSRASE "PERMANENT PEACE" MUST HAVE EVOKED MIXED REACTIONS, ESPECIALLY SINCE HIS EARLIER STATEMENT THAT "PEACE IS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION" HAS BECOME A TOUCHSTONE HERE FOR ARAB INSINCERITY WHEN SPEAKING OF PEACE.

4. IN RECENT WEEKS, RABIN HAS FREQUENTLY CATEGORIZED UNDER THREE HEADINGS ISRAEL'S CONCEPTIONS OF THE NATURE OF AN EVENTUAL MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. THESE ARE (A) THE MEANING OF PEACE; (B) THE BORDERS OF PEACE; AND (C) THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. HE OBVIOUSLY FINDS SADAT'S PROPOSALS DEFICIENT ON ALL THREE COUNTS. IN A NOVEMBER 15 SPEECH AT BAR ILAN UNIVERSITY, RABIN SAID THAT THE CURRENT ARAB EFFORT TO CREATE A PEACE-LOVING IMAGE IN THE UNITED STATES WAS DESIGNED TO PUT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL. THIS THEME WAS ALSO UNDERLINED BY ALLON IN HIS NOVEMBER 13 MEETING WITH CODEL FLOWERS, WHEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD THE CONGRESSMEN THAT SADAT'S PEACE PROPOSAL INCLUDED PRECONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT HIS PROPOSAL SHOULD NOT CAUSE GREAT EXCITEMENT. PERES SAID IN A SPEECH NOVEMBER 16 THAT "THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT CLAIMS THAT HE WANTS A 'PEACE AGREEMENT'--BUT NOT A 'PEACE PACTM' SADAT IS PREPARED FOR 'GENUINE PEACE,' BUT NOT FOR A PEACE THAT WOULD INCLUDE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TIES, PEACE IN THE 'NEXT GENERATION'--NOT 'IN OUR TIME.'"

5. COMMENT: WHILE THE ISRAELIS SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SURPRISED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 07815 181002Z

BY SADAT'S PROPOSALS, THEY APPEAR NOT TO HAVE BEEN PREPARED OR HAPPY TO SEE THE ARABS SEIZE THE NEGOTIATING INITIATIVE, ESPECIALLY WHEN USING AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN TO CARRY THE MESSAGE. THE TENTATIVE AND CAUTIOUS REACTION OF ISRAELI LEADERS TO SADAT'S PROPOSALS SHOWS NO CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS POSITIONS ALTHOUGH THEIR CAUTION IS NOW BEGINNING TO COME IN FOR CRITICISM (GENERALLY: WHAT DO WE HAVE TO LOSE IN RESPONDING FORTHRIGHTLY) FROM DISPARATE POLITICAL FIGURES

SUCH AS MOSHE DAYAN, SHMUEL TAMIR OF THE THREE CENTER, AND
DOV ZAKIN OF MAPAM.
TOON

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